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Emphasized in this speech are the innovative practices in the standardized foreign language testing programs sponsored by the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) and the Modern Language Association (MLA). The CEEB projected listening and reading "composite tests" and changes in the French and Latin Advanced Placement Tests are described in the major portion of the document. Comprising another significant section are discussions of developments in the Graduate and Undergraduate Record Examinations and Graduate School Foreign Language Tests. A brief account of the latest events relevant to the MLA's Cooperative Foreign Language and Proficiency Tests precedes concluding remarks on the vital issues involved in proper classroom testing for diagnostic, instructional, and evaluative purposes. (AF)

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Some Recent Developments in Standardized Foreign Language Tests

(address at Testing Clinics of the Southern Conference on Language Teaching--Atlanta, Georgia, 2/14-15/69)

Since I am sure the majority of the audience today consists of classroom teachers, it will be appropriate if the clear focus of this testing clinic is on how to construct better practical evaluative instruments for routine use in the classroom and in the language laboratory. It is reasonable to assume, however, that among you there is some interest and perhaps even concern about such standardized testing programs as those sponsored by the College Entrance Examination Board, which your students are likely to encounter shortly or at some time in the future. I shall therefore spend a few minutes at the outset simply mentioning a number of recent developments with regard to the foreign language tests of the major national testing programs. As a necessary point of clarification I should note that although these testing programs are sponsored by a variety of organizations, the developmental work on the tests is conducted by Educational Testing Service, where until recently I served as Chairman of the Foreign Language Department. During the discussion period following these introductory remarks by Miss Warriner and myself, I shall be happy, of course, to elaborate on any of the specific developments I am about to mention or on any other facets of these standardized testing programs.

With respect to the College Board's Achievement Test Program, the efforts of the Foreign Language Examining Committees and the ETS Foreign Language Department have been concentrated over the past few years on having the Board incorporate a listening section into the now essentially reading tests in the regular program. As you are no doubt aware, separate listening comprehension tests are now offered in a Supplementary Program, but are optional as far as the students are concerned. Most members of the

foreign language teaching community now feel, and have so felt for a number of years, that tests of foreign language achievement which do not include a satisfactory measure of aural skill cannot be considered fully valid. Further, in view of the position and prestige of the College Board the offering of such tests does a disservice to those attempting to promote the objective of essentially equal emphasis in the beginning and intermediate courses on the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. I wish I were in a position to announce at this time that the projected "composite tests" of listening and reading were firmly scheduled for imminent introduction into the regular Achievement Test Program. Unfortunately, I must state instead that the administrative complexities involved in the composite test plans and the problems associated with assuring adequate and uniform sound quality at the thousands of College Board test centers have not been completely overcome. Although the Board, its examiner committees, and ETS are all squarely behind the composite test proposal and feasibility studies are being conducted, the most optimistic, and I'm afraid it is very optimistic, estimate for its realization would be the 1970-71 academic year.

Fortunately, my two news items with respect to the College Board Advanced Placement Program are of a happier nature. For a number of years now the French Advanced Placement Committee has been concerned that there may be many French secondary school students, fully qualified to do college-level advanced placement work in their senior year, who do not have an over-riding interest in literary studies and who are therefore not well served by the current course and examination which place heavy emphasis on French literature. I am pleased to be able to say that plans are now progressing rapidly towards the introduction, probably in May 1971, of a French Advanced Placement Language Examination

which will be considered on a par with the current Literature Examination. The emphasis will be on the development of fluency in the communicative skills through reading, writing and class discussions on a wide range of topics embracing aspects of contemporary French culture and the history, geography and political and social institutions of France.

Although one does not usually associate radical innovation with Latin, one of the most significant developments in the Advanced Placement Program is notably in the classics. Beginning in May, 1969, the current three-hour Latin IV and Latin V Advanced Placement examinations will be replaced by four 90-minute examinations, measuring knowledge and ability in the areas of the Epic (Vergil), the Lyric (Horace and Catullus), Latin Comedy (Terrence and Plautus), and Latin Prose (Cicero and Livy). Students will be able to select any one or two of the four examinations in a given year, and it is anticipated that most colleges will offer for each a semester's credit and/or placement to students performing at a satisfactory level. There is little question but that the new format corresponds more closely to the typical college's Latin curriculum and that this innovation will facilitate the attainment of one of the Advanced Placement Program's primary objectives, that of gaining appropriate recognition for college-level work done by well-prepared and gifted students in the secondary school.

On the more exalted level of the Graduate Record Examinations two significant developments deserve mention. Since the GRE's inception many years ago the Program has attempted to meet two conceptually different needs: to contribute to the selection of students who have the capability of doing satisfactory work in graduate school and to provide comprehensive measures of the achievement of undergraduate majors. Al-

though there is obviously a fair strong relationship between these objectives and between the types of examinations required, it has become increasingly apparent that each objective would be better met through an examination specifically tailored to it. Thus, a new testing program called the Undergraduate Record Examinations, which will be distinct from the GRE and not under the policy control of the Graduate Record Examinations Board, has been established. The first set of two-hour URE examinations to measure the achievement of undergraduate majors in various specialized fields will be offered on an institutional basis in the Fall of this year. Of specific interest to the foreign language profession will be the fact that in addition to French and Spanish examinations both programs, the URE in 1969 and the GRE shortly thereafter, will include tests in German. The development of the German tests, long absent from the GRE Program due to an insuffieciency of candidates and a lack of graduate school concern, is being guided by a panel of eminent professors and the results of a survey of some 300 colleges offering German which sought to determine the appropriate content and emphases for the undergraduate examination.

Those few students who succeed on the College Board Examinations and the Graduate Record Examinations and are finally in sight of the Ph.D or some other advanced degree, are likely to encounter the Graduate School Foreign Language Tests now used by about half of the graduate schools in conjunction with certifying students as having met a degree requirement in foreign languages. Within the past two years a Spanish Test has been added to this Program to complement the offerings in French, German and Russian. By the Fall of this year the Spanish Test forms will be parallel to those in the other languages in that they will include an optional section in which students work only with reading materials in their general area of specialization, i.e. the Humanities, Natural Sciences, or Social

Sciences. The Fall issue of the ACTFL publication, Foreign Language Annals, was devoted this past year almost exclusively to a series of three articles relating to the graduate degree foreign language requirement and the Graduate School Foreign Language Tests and I would urge you to refer to these informative articles if you have an especial interest in this area. I might just mention that in addition to the comprehensive questionnaire survey of graduate school department chairmen described in the Annals issue, ETS and the GRE Board, which now has policy control of the GSFLT Program, are planning to conduct further interesting research with respect to the validity of the testing instruments.

My final remarks with regard to standardized testing programs concern the Modern Language Association's Cooperative Foreign Language and Proficiency Tests. There are complex intricacies to the developments in these programs which I will not have time to unravel for you. I did want to mention, however, that in addition to the two levels of four-skill test batteries which have been made available to schools and colleges in the past, a third and higher level corresponding to the proficiency tests, which were previously administered only on a secure basis, is now being offered for distribution. The lower-level tests are appropriate for use with first and second-year secondary school students or first-year college students, the middle level with third and fourth-year secondary school students or second-year college students, and the higher level with advanced students and prospective teachers. I shall be happy to supply more specific information later about the now three MLA Programs in French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish or to direct you to an appropriate source if any of you express the desire to know more of the practical details.

Since I have devoted somewhat more time than I had intended to National testing programs, the subject on which I am best versed, I would like in

closing to quickly re-focus the attention of the group on what I consider the more vital issues of proper classroom testing for diagnostic, instructional and evaluative purposes. A few of the topics and problems which I hope this group will discuss are the following: (1) how can testing best support the instructional objectives of an audio-lingual program, (2) what techniques can be devised to measure objectively but in a practical way the all-important speaking skills, (3) how can the teacher increase the effectiveness of his evaluation of unstructured writing exercises, (4) what are the relative advantages and disadvantages of attempting to provide "pure" evaluation of each of the four basic skills as opposed to combining the testing of these skills in more global measures of language achievement, and (5) what are the most appropriate roles for objective a nd non-objective techniques in foreign language classroom testing.

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